

February 14, 1990

Mr. Dean Fowler
Colbert Landfill Project Manager
Spokane County Public Works
N 811 Jefferson Street
Spokane, Washington 99260-0180

RE: Water sampling procedures for the Colbert area residents

Dear Mr. Fowler;

At our most recent meeting, the Colbert Landfill Contaminant Area Committee addressed a number of concerns regarding the collection procedures for the water samples in the testing program. These concerns include inadequate methodology, time lapse from collection time to time of actual testing, questions about the well of origin for certain water samples and the process for communication with the individual homeowners regarding testing procedures. Specific anecdotal instances follow.

One home owner observed the sampling process and was quite concerned that the water taken was cloudy and dirty. He was assured that this "was not a problem." We think it is! The person who was doing the sampling also had inadequate technical knowledge to correctly operate this man's system.

On a more serious note, a system was sampled that had in actuality been shut down and blown out for the winter. On a later date, when confronted by the property owner with the concern, the sampler pointed out where the sample was "obtained." He pointed to an empty air chamber.

On another occasion the sampler tried to access the well by removing a plug from the pump itself, not even a water connection. The owner stated that the sampler had to be shown where the faucet was. He then proceeded to take the samples and did not run the water for the proscribed time prior to taking the samples. Again, a serious lapse in technique!

Dean, as you are well aware, the evaluation of the wells is a very critical matter. The whole issue revolves around the quality of well water. If the wells are not sampled correctly and the samples are not processed appropriately and accurately, we might as well revert back to horse and buggy technology. At this time we have little faith in the process.

USEPA SF



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Given that wells are currently being found with new contamination and there are significant differences in some wells from test to test it is crucial that the sampling process be looked at carefully. We are not on a witch hunt nor are we "after anyone's job" but we do expect and demand quality testing and sampling. We have to drink this water. Daily.

For quite some time after the consent decree completion there was a relatively high level of trust in our community regarding the clean-up process. Wells were being drilled, data was forthcoming and action was evident. This current set of concerns about the sampling and testing have eroded this trust to a very low level. Do we have a standardized sampling procedure? If so are the technicians trained adequately? Please do whatever it takes to resolve our problem. I will be eagerly awaiting your reply.

Sincerely yours

(b) (6)

(b) (6)

Chair

cc

Committee

Mike Blum, Ecology

Gretchen Schmidt, EPA

Commissioners

A & A PROPERTIES
PO BOX 222
NEWMAN LAKE, WA 99025-0222
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FEBRUARY 23, 1990

(b) (6)
CLCAC SECRETARY
(b) (6)
COLBERT, WA 99005

DEAR (b) (6) :

I BELIEVE THAT I SHOULD RESPOND TO THE LETTER FROM (b) (6) TO DEAN FOWLER. IN ORDER TO DEAL WITH THIS AND OTHER ISSUES WHICH HAVE ARISEN, I AM NOW REQUESTING THAT YOU GIVE ME A LIST OF CONCERNS AND PROBLEMS IN THE SAMPLING PLAN THAT YOU PRESENTED AT THE SAMPLING SUBCOMMITTEE MEETINGS. BEING SUPPLIED WITH THAT LIST I WILL BE ABLE TO GIVE YOU THE ACTIONS THAT WERE TAKEN BY MYSELF TO ADDRESS EACH INSTANCE.

YOU HAVE ME AT A DISADVANTAGE SIMPLY BECAUSE I HAD NEVER BEEN CONTACTED DIRECTLY BY ANY OF THE PEOPLE AFFECTED BY THE CONCERNS YOU PRESENTED AT THE SAMPLING SUBCOMMITTEE MEETINGS. I TOOK YOUR CONCERN AND ADDRESSED THE ISSUE WITH MEL WILSON, THEN REPORTED BACK TO THE COMMITTEE, OR TO YOU DIRECTLY IN SOME INSTANCES. IT IS DIFFICULT TO BE THE SAMPLING COORDINATOR AND HAVE ONLY INDIRECT CONTACT WITH THE COMPLAINTS OF THE PEOPLE. THERE ARE MANY PEOPLE WHO ARE CURRENTLY CONTACTING ME DIRECTLY BUT THERE SEEM TO BE A FEW WHO IN THE RECENT PAST HAVE DECIDED TO GO THROUGH YOU TO HAVE THEIR PROBLEMS BROUGHT TO MY ATTENTION.

IN THE PAST I RELIED ON YOU AND THE CLCAC TO COMMUNICATE ON MY BEHALF ABOUT CITIZENS CONCERNS YOU HAVE BROUGHT TO MY ATTENTION. HOWEVER, I BELIEVE THE CIRCUMSTANCES PRESENTED BY (b) (6) LETTER REQUIRE THAT TO CHANGE. THEREFORE, I PLAN TO DEVELOP A MAILING TO THE WELL OWNERS THAT WOULD REAFFIRM THE CHANNEL OF COMMUNICATIONS NECESSARY TO RESOLVE PROBLEMS WITH THE WELL SAMPLING PROGRAM.

IN THE FUTURE, PLEASE ADVISE THOSE CONTACTING YOU TO CONTACT ME DIRECTLY, THAT WAY I WILL HAVE FIRST HAND INFORMATION AND CAN EFFECTIVELY WORK TOWARDS REBUILDING THE CONFIDENCE OF THE COMMUNITY.



BRUCE G. AUSTIN

CC: JERRY NEAL
JOHN MC BRIDE
GEORGE BRITTON
JIM LEGAT
(b) (6)
MEL WILSON

DENNIS SCOTT
DAVID POWERS
MIKE BLUM
DEAN FOWLER
PAT MUMMEY

WM. DOBRATZ
BRUCE FOREMAN
(b) (6)
LARRY BEARD
STEVE HASSON
GRETCHEN SCHMIDT, EPA